

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 2 through 8 and 10 through 18 without prejudice. Amend the claims as shown in the following complete listing of all the claims.

1.(Currently Amended) In a railroad switch for use with intersecting railroad rails and having two switch points interconnected by a switch machine between the two switch points and connected thereto by an operating rod at each end of the switch machine, wherein, as said operating rods shift to reposition said two switch points, the angle formed by each said operating rod and its associated switch point changes, a pivoting connector assembly connecting each operating rod to its associated switch point, the connector assembly comprising:

a generally horizontal pivot pin mounted on the associated switch point, with its longitudinal axis extending substantially parallel to said switch point;

a socket on said operating rod at the outer end thereof, said socket having an open bore with a vertical axis;

a vertical shaft fixedly mounted in said operating rod socket bore, said fixed mounting preventing rotation of said vertical shaft relative to said socket bore; and

~~a collar on said vertical shaft, said collar having an open bore adapted to receive said pivot pin therethrough in longitudinally sliding engagement, said collar bore being rotatable about said vertical axis of said socket bore;~~

an outer collar member fixedly mounted to said vertical shaft, said fixed mounting preventing rotation of said outer collar member relative to said vertical shaft; and

an inner collar member within said outer collar member, said inner collar member having an open bore adapted to receive said pivot pin therethrough in longitudinally sliding engagement, said inner collar member being rotatable about said vertical axis relative to said outer collar member, thereby preventing binding of said switch machine by said connector assembly as said angle between said operating rod and said switch point changes.

~~whereby the switch machine is adapted to move the switch point by extending and retracting said operating rod by the application of force acting substantially along the longitudinal axis of said operating rod, and without binding of said collar on said pivot pin.~~

2. - 8.(Cancelled)

9.(Currently Amended) A switch machine for operating a railroad switch with two switch points at intersecting railroad rails, said switch machine comprising:

a housing mounted between said two switch points;

two operating rods, each one of said operating rods having an inner end within said housing and an outer end extending from said housing for repositioning one of said switch points, each one of said operating rods and its associated switch point establishing an angle therebetween for the application of lateral force to the switch point to move the switch point;

a shifting mechanism within said housing, said shifting mechanism being engageable to said inner end of each one of said operating rods, said shifting mechanism being adapted to simultaneously shift said operating rods between two positions relative to said housing, resulting in simultaneous repositioning of said two switch points, wherein, as said operating rods shift to reposition said two switch points, said angle between each said operating rod and its associated switch point changes;
and

~~a connector assembly connecting each one of said extending operating rod ends to its associated switch point, said connector assembly having freedom of movement in the horizontal direction extending substantially parallel to the switch point and being pivotable about a vertical axis~~

a horizontal pivot pin mounted on each switch point, with its longitudinal axis extending substantially parallel to said switch point;

a socket on each said operating rod at the outer end thereof, said socket having an open bore with a vertical axis;

a vertical shaft fixedly mounted in each said operating rod socket bore, said fixed mounting preventing rotation of said vertical shaft relative to said socket bore;
and

an outer collar member fixedly mounted to each said vertical shaft, said fixed mounting preventing rotation of said outer collar member relative to said vertical shaft;

an inner collar member within each said outer collar member, said inner collar member

having an open bore adapted to receive said pivot pin therethrough in longitudinally sliding engagement, said inner collar member being rotatable about said vertical axis relative to said outer collar member to allow said angle between said operating rod and said associated switch point to change as said associated switch point is repositioned;

~~whereby said switch machine is adapted to move said switch points by extending and retracting said operating rods by the application of said force acting substantially along the longitudinal axes of said operating rods.~~

10. - 18.(Cancelled)